

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

centers in the northern zone and Teheran. The Iranian Communist press as a rule quoted the Tass dispatches that described the enthusiasm of the local workers as hosts to their Russian colleagues. The meetings harangued by these Soviet delegates frequently ended with cries and resolutions demanding the extirpation of fascism, the punishment of right-wing "traitors," and so forth. Also in the summer of 1945 the Russians proposed to the Iranian government the convocation of a Soviet-Iranian medical conference in Teheran. The Iranians, reluctant to refuse outright, agreed to hold the conference but to offset Soviet propaganda decided to make it an international meeting attended by delegations from the Middle East and Great Britain. Thus at the least propitious time, between the end of war in Europe and in Japan, Teheran was the scene of an international conference of medicine not desired by anyone except the Russians.

It was clear that while paying lip service to the principle of withdrawal, the Russians did not surrender in reality any of their positions and gave ominous signs of intensifying their action in Iran. In the middle of August violent disturbances broke out in Khorasan and Azerbaijan. As previously related, the Khorasan trouble was the result of Soviet intrigue among army officers and the Turkoman tribes. Somehow the Iranian government managed to restore the Khorasan situation to normalcy, but in Azerbaijan matters turned for the worse.

THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

In August, 1945, the Tudeh party staged a "rehearsal" in Tabriz. Its armed partisans, protected by Soviet troops, captured several government buildings and attempted to impose their

rule upon the city and the adjacent area. At the same time a manifesto demanding administrative and cultural autonomy for Azerbaijan within the framework of the Iranian state was issued in the form of a leaflet. The manifesto claimed that 4,500,000 Azerbaijanis were deprived of their rights by the central government and demanded freedom to pursue their national development and to use their native language. The Iranian governor, former Premier Bayat, was powerless as Iranian gendarmerie and army units were prevented from leaving their barracks by the Soviet authorities. Attempts of the central government to intervene were fruitless, especially in view of simultaneous trouble in